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REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended to the undersigned during the telephone interview conducted on November 10, 2004.

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 11, 2004. Claims 1-50 are pending, with claims 1-3, 34-36, 43-45, 49 and 50 being independent in form. The Office Action states that claims 5, 6, 8-15, 22-33, 38, 39 and 41-50 have been allowed. By this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 39 and 42 to correct obvious typographical errors, and amended independent claims 1-3 and 34-36 to clarify the claimed invention. Applicant submits that no new issues and no new matter have been introduced.

Claims 1-4, 7, 16-21, 34-37 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as purportedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,631,431 to Silvkoff.

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that claims 1-4, 7, 16-21, 34-37 and 40 are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

As an initial matter, it is respectfully pointed out that U.S. Patent No. 6,631,431 issued to Silvkoff from application no. 09/474,903 filed December 30, 1999, which claims the benefit of provisional application no. 60/154,022, filed September 15, 1999. Therefore, the earliest possible effective date of Silvkoff as a 35 U.S.C. §102(e) reference is September 15, 1999.

This application was filed March 29, 2000, claiming the priority of Japanese Applications Nos. 11-096093 and 11-179329, filed April 2, 1999 and June 25, 1999, respectively. Certified copies of Japanese priority Applications Nos. 11-096093 and 11-179329 were submitted to the USPTO on April 27, 2000. Therefore, Silvkoff is not prior art to the pending claims of this application.

In addition, Silvkoff does not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

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This application relates to facsimile image transmission and/or facsimile polling operations wherein a facsimile apparatus is provided with a plurality of boxes each associated with a corresponding F-code. The facsimile apparatus executes a center-machine application for facsimile communication services. For each box, a corresponding F-code, box name and password are registered for the box. When a transmission side wishes to transmit a facsimile to the box, the corresponding F-code is embedded in a setup signal transmitted during the pre-transmission procedure. The center-machine facsimile apparatus stores the received facsimile image information in the box associated with the F-code. A user of the destination can retrieve the facsimile from the box by entering the F-code and password associated with the box.

According to the present application, a user is prompted for a F-code when the user operates a facsimile apparatus for performing facsimile image transmission (for example, independent claim 1, 3, 34 or 36, as amended) or for producing a facsimile polling document (for example, independent claim 2 or 35, as amended). The F-code entered by the user is compared with F-codes registered with corresponding boxes of the apparatus. The facsimile image transmission operation or facsimile polling document producing operation is accepted only after the entered F-code is matched to a registered F-code.

Based on the discussion during the telephone interview, independent claims 1, 3, 34 and 36 have been amended to clarify that they are directed to use of F-code information in facsimile image transmission operation, and independent claims 2 and 35 have been amended to clarify that they are directed to use of F-code information in facsimile polling operation, although the preambles of the claims already set forth these contexts. Accordingly, Applicant submits that no new issues are presented by the claim amendments.

Silvkoff, as understood by Applicants, is directed to a serial data communication bus controller, compliant with the CAN (Controller Area Network) bus standard.

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As discussed during the telephone interview, the CAN bus is typically used in a context in which microcontroller-based devices connected to the CAN bus through respective CAN interfaces communicate with each other as well as with peripheral devices (for example, sensors). Messages transmitted on a CAN bus typically contain identifiers which indicate the content of the message (rather than the address of the sender or destination), and each message is limited to a maximum data size of 8 bytes. Some printouts of web pages which contain a general discussion of Controller Area Network technology is submitted herewith for the reference of the Examiner.

The controller of Silvkoff is provided with one or more message buffers, which have a maximum storage capacity of 256 bytes. The message buffer coupled with acceptance filters allow the controller to avoid irrelevant messages and to present the CPU with only those messages that are of interest.

Silvkoff does not teach or suggest, however, apparatuses or techniques for performing facsimile image transmission or facsimile polling operation.

As discussed during the telephone interview, Silvkoff does not teach or suggest that the message buffer is used for storing facsimile image information or facsimile polling documents. Applicant submits that the message buffer of Silvkoff which has a maximum storage of 256 bytes cannot serve as a box for storing facsimiles to be retrieved on demand by the destination user. In order to store the typical facsimile, much more storage would be needed. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would not understand Silvkoff to be directed to facsimile transmission.

The Office Action states that Silvkoff discloses that CAN can be used with office automation equipment.

As pointed out during the telephone interview, although it may be possible to adapt a facsimile apparatus to be connected to a CAN bus, connection to the CAN bus allows the facsimile apparatus merely to receive messages containing 8-bytes (or less) of data from other

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devices. Such connection allows another device to tell the facsimile apparatus to, for example, power down (such as when system power is low), restart, etc. However, Applicant is not aware of any instances of use of a CAN bus for facsimile image transmission or facsimile polling operation.

Moreover, as discussed during the telephone interview, Silvkoff does not disclose or suggest that the controller of Silvkoff performs facsimile image transmission or facsimile polling operations.

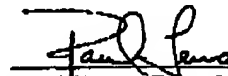
Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1-3 and 34-36, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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